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# THE ROBBER IN ENGLAND

BY MARGUERITE WILKINSON

I am a robber from over the seas;  
I have come stealing things like these:  
The slant of the hills toward Parracombe Town,  
The look of the sea from Porlock down,  
The patchwork of fields with hedges between  
Dividing the new-ploughed red from green  
Like a magical quilt-stitch set to bind  
Fields upon hills around and behind.  
I have come stealing the tilt of the thatches  
Where villages doze among the green patches,  
Where each little house as the road winds around  
Seems to have grown from a root in the ground,  
For almost as natural as trees are they  
With the dull brown thatch above the stone's old grey,  
Or ancient plaster firm and mellow  
In quiet tones of cream or yellow.  
When I go home I shall carry away  
Deep-drawn fragrance of Devon hay,  
The teasing turn of a path like a dream  
And the soothing flavor of Devonshire cream,  
The fiery glance of poppies in corn,  
The blessed light on a holy book,  
Through colored windows reverently borne  
While overhead the sweet bells shook  
For somebody married, somebody dead,  
Or another hour of the ages, sped.  
Into my treasury I shall thrust  
Heather-plunder and bracken-rust,  
Thorn of holly and ivy-bud  
And songs of all the singing brood,  
With English voices, cheery and sweet,  
And the patient look of English feet  
Clumsily shod and moving slow  
Wherever the paths of the good land go,  
Or on streets of London that twist and wind  
Like the whimsical humor of the English mind.

These and the angels weeping stone tears  
In Westminster Abbey, forever and ever,  
And the knights that sound the hours with spears  
In Wells Cathedral, prompt and clever,  
The combs the Romans used at Bath,  
The Cheshire Cheese where Johnson made merry,  
The Bloody Tower with its scenes of wrath,  
*And the old Cathedral of Canterbury—*  
These I have stolen, stolen away  
To make them mine till my dying day,  
And neither the King in Buckingham Palace,  
Nor the gracious Queen with her crown of gold,  
Will take them from me. For all without malice,  
What I have taken I mean to hold.